

Dogs Rules for NRC Conservation Land

Presentation to the Select Board

January 22, 2018

NRC Land Management

- Conservation Commission Act (MGL Ch. 40 § 8c)
- Natural Resources Commission – 1959

NRC Land Management and Stewardship

- Over 1,400 acres of conservation land
- **1974** - conservation land rules adopted
- **2003** - dog rule added
- **2014** - rules amended to require that “dogs be leashed or under effective and direct control” and “on leash at Conservation Lands that are so posted”

Dogs and the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

- 1992 OSRP
- 2004 OSRP
- 2015 OSRP

Estabrook Woods History

- **1960s** – Harvard acquired land from Gordon Hutchins (some parcels transferred through The Nature Conservancy)
- **1960s** - Gordon Hutchins imposed a Nature Preserve Restriction on deeds that he conveyed to Harvard, as well as parcels he continued to own, including Punkatasset
- **1971** – Town acquires Punkatasset
- **1990s** – Campaign for the Estabrook Woods

Context to 2017 Discussions

- ***February 2017*** - Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP) Workshop
- ***February 2017*** - Estabrook Landowner Meeting
- ***March 2017*** - Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) Meeting

Public Process

ONE PUBLIC HEARING

May 11

SEVENTEEN PUBLIC MEETINGS

May 17

September 6

October 17

June 7

September 13

October 18

June 29

September 25

November 1

July 12

September 27

December 6

July 27

October 2

December 20

August 16

October 10

Information Collected and Reviewed

- Natural Resource Values Report
- Citizen Comments (125+)
- Concord Unleashed Petition
- Scientific Studies
- Professional Dog Training Tapes
- Animal Control Officer presentation
- 2017 Ranger report
- NRC personal observations from field visits
- Concord Dog Bylaw
- Other Town rules
- Approaches from other Agencies and Organizations
- Food safety rules and science
- Health and environmental issues with dog waste

Guiding Principles for Decision Making

- NRC's responsibility to protect conservation land
- Precautionary principle applied
- All conservation land users have a right to a safe and enjoyable experience

Effective Control

Key Subcommittee Findings

- No uniform definition of effective control
- Sight and voice control standards necessary, and requires continual training
- Citizen concern when approached by off leash dogs
- NRC rules define effective control

Education

Key Subcommittee Findings

- Insufficient Signage
- Better Communication
- Good examples to draw from

Dog Waste

Key Subcommittee Findings

- Dog waste on conservation lands continues to be observed
- The dog walking community feels that more barrels will enhance compliance
- Education necessary
- Need consistency throughout Town

Review of Primary Conservation Lands

- Deed and Conservation Restriction research
- Parcel Size
- Length of trails
- Availability of Parking
- Natural Resources Values
 - BloMap
 - Rare Species Habitats
 - Vernal Pools
- Agricultural lands
- Special Consideration (Erosion, bobolink nesting)

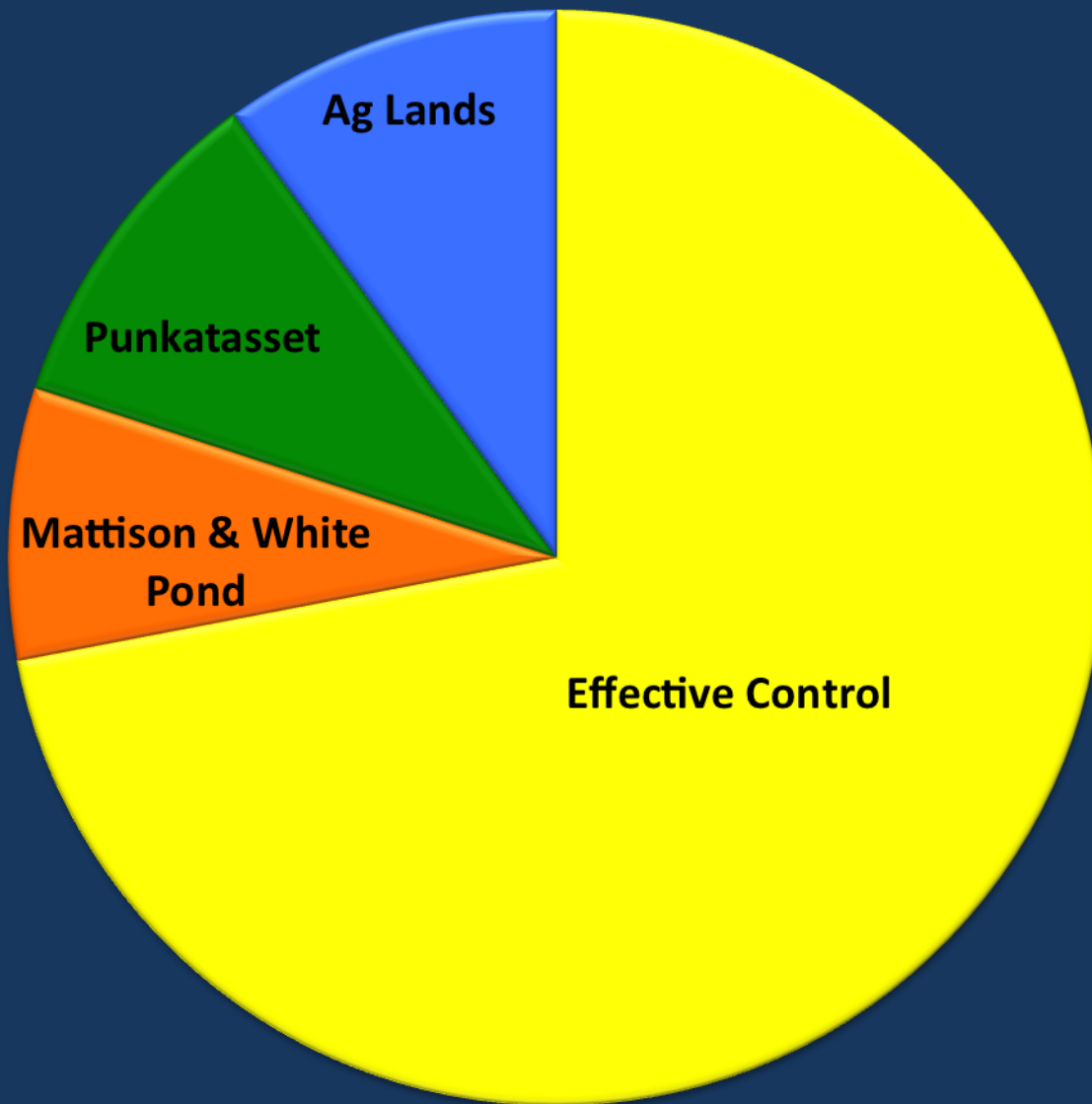
Dog Rules on Conservation Land

1. Dogs must be on leash or under effective voice control at all times.
2. Leash dogs in areas that are so posted.
3. Dogs must be within sight at all times.
4. Always carry a leash for each dog (8 foot maximum).
5. Maximum of 2 dogs are allowed off leash per person. 3 dogs total are permitted per person.
6. Leash up in parking areas and until you reach a sign allowing unleashing.
7. Leash up as you approach other trail users.
8. Always pick up dog waste and dispose of waste properly.
9. People and dogs must stay on marked trails.
10. Dogs must be licensed and up to date on vaccinations.
11. Dogs are not permitted to chase, hunt, or harass people, wildlife, other dogs, horses, or livestock.

Leash Regulations for Conservation Lands

- Maintain existing restrictions at Mattison Field and White Pond
- Leash dogs at Punkatasset
- Proposed leashing for NRC Agricultural Lands

% NRC Trails



Recommendations to Select Board

- Amend the Dog Bylaw to better define “under the control of its owner”
- Adopt a dog waste removal policy for all Town owned land
- Develop campaign to encourage proper dog waste disposal Town-wide
- Adopt leash restrictions at agricultural lands under Select Board Control
- Reissue leash requirement at White Pond land under Select Board Control
- Increase dog license fee
- Develop Town dog website

Next Steps

- Roll out trailhead signage
- Rangers to educate and monitor compliance
- Develop brochure for distribution
- Finalize leashing rules for NRC Ag Lands
- Encourage responsible dog owners to contribute to these efforts

Thank You